

March 11, 1955

Dear Syd:

I promised to keep you as well informed as possible about Bob Wright. I am sorry not to be able to give more definite word than this: as of today he is still but slowly recovering consciousness. He did speak a couple of words yesterday, a point we have been relying on as a sign against concealed left-cerebral injury. Except for the agonizing slowness of his progress, there has been substantial, no objective sign of serious injury except around the right pre-central (motor) areas; if that is all there proves to be, and it will be impossible to evaluate its extent for a long time, we may count him blessed.

I hardly know how to describe his immediate condition. His surgeon considers him substantially decompressed— the wound is now depressed, the spinal pressure back to normal, etc. He has occasional partial awareness, but not recognition; a few simple voluntary movements; a few simple responses to verbal instructions. He is still pulling ahead, but very slowly indeed. We can only hope his progress will be as consistent as it is slow.

Mari is back to work. I have to admire her ability to do this, as distracted as I know she is. Fortunately, the hospital is not far off, so she can visit Bob as often as the surgeon will allow her to.

It will be difficult to post a daily bulletin. So please consider that the present course is extrapolated until you hear further. I will let you know promptly of any considerable change.

Yours sincerely,


Joshua Lederberg

P.S. I have received your amusing chain letter. Please forgive me for not cooperating just now; it just happens to strike me at the wrong time. I am happy to note that I have already been in touch with all 4 of the antecedents.

